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Words of truth and love

Do all the good you can.

WORDS

OF

TRUTH AND LOVE.

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REV. WILLIAM S. PLUMER, D.D.

"Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?"—JER. iii. 4.

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WORDS OF TRUTH AND LOVE.

I.

THE HOLY CHILD JESUS.

JESUS CHRIST was the only child ever born that did not have a sinful nature. It is very fit, therefore, that pious men should call him the *holy child Jesus*. Acts iv. 27. The angel who foretold his birth to Mary said, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke i. 35. From the first, Christ's whole nature was pure. He never sinned. In childhood, youth and manhood he was holy. While he was yet a suckling, he had Christian graces in exercise, Ps. xxii. 9. He never had one wicked feeling. He cherished no sinful thought. He never spoke an evil word. He never did

a wrong act. The longer he lived, the more did he prove his spotless purity. He grew in favour with God and man. Luke ii. 52. Let us note some things.

I. Jesus Christ was always *true*. He lied to no one. He deceived no one. He made up no stories to amuse or mislead mankind. He was truth itself. Other children go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies, Ps. lviii. 3. So strong is this bias that it requires all the wisdom of good parents to check it. But Jesus loved truth and hated every false way.

II. Jesus Christ was *just*. He wronged no one. His thoughts were just. His words were just. His deeds were just. Though Lord of all, he was willing to live and die poor, rather than to seem to claim that which was not his own. He never cheated any one. He often gave up his own rights. He never made others give up their rights for him. If all the world were as just as Jesus Christ was, there would be a speedy end of all strife.

III. Jesus Christ was *kind*. His heart

was full of tenderness and gentleness. He pitied like a God. He said and did more kind things than any could read in a long lifetime, if they were fully written. John xxi. 25. Never did he by harshness drive any one away from him. Some thought he did not care for little children. But they were wholly mistaken. Matt. xix. 13–15, Mark x. 13–16, Luke xviii. 16. Jesus loved children as none else ever did. He died for them no less than for their parents. Is it not strange that every one does not love Jesus? He is so loving and so lovely. None has done so much for us all. He is full of grace and mercy.

IV. Jesus Christ was *devout*. He loved prayer and praise. He loved to think on God. He loved the Bible, and the Sabbath, and the house of God. Even after walking in the day over the dusty plains of Judea he used to retire and spend the night where prayer was wont to be made. Luke vi. 12. He loved God, and God loved him. His fellowship was with his Father.

V. Jesus Christ *kept the whole law of God.* He broke no precept. He came short in nothing. He thought, and felt, and said, and did all that the law required. He never did, or said, or felt, or thought anything that it forbade.

So that there was no flaw in his character. Neither God nor man had any cause to find fault with him. By a voice from heaven, God said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The holy angels and the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven find great joy in admiring him. The judge that sat on his trial, more than once said, "I find no fault in him." Mohammed, who sat up a kingdom opposed to Christ, did not deny that Jesus was pure and holy. Even worse infidels, who have blasphemed the Bible, profaned the Sabbath, mocked at holy worship, and laughed at holy people, have been forced to say, that the good name of Jesus Christ was spotless. None ever proved a fault on him.

Is Jesus Christ holy, harmless, and unde-

filed? Then he is fit to be our Prophet, Priest and King. We could not trust a Mediator, who, like ourselves, was vile and an offence unto God. A sinner could not stand between sinners and a holy God. A sinner might as well answer for himself as have another sinner to defend him. Because Jesus was without sin, he could bear the sin of many. A lamb for sacrifice must be without spot or blemish. It is for a joy to all good men that the Redeemer is himself without sin.

If we would be saved, we must flee to Christ. He is the only refuge, the only Redeemer of lost men.

If we would be saved, we must become like Christ. That requires a great change which can be wrought only by the power of the Holy Ghost. He alone can change the vile heart, and cure the love and habit of sinning. Old or young we must all be born again. If we are ever to be saved, God must take the heart of stone out of our flesh, and give us a heart of flesh. Else our hardness of heart will forever render us unfit for

heaven. Oh, that each one would cry mightily to God to give him a new heart, and to put a right spirit within him. God will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

Let us search and try our ways, and find out how wicked we are. Let us not deceive ourselves. Many think that they are something, when they are nothing. It is not easy to learn the whole truth about our own evil hearts. Let us be candid. Self-love blinds us. Let us be thorough and look at the dark signs as well as pleasant ones. Let us not hold fast deceit. Many perish because they are not willing to know the truth about themselves. If we love darkness, it will ruin us. Let us not spare our own faults. He is our friend, who kindly tells us of our sins. It will be a dreadful thing to wake up at the close of life and find that we are lost forever.

If we do not kill sin, it will kill us. If we do not put it to death, it will bring on us a death that never dies. Some Hindoos make men shudder by carrying venomous serpents in their bosoms. Those, who thus carry them,

think they have tamed them, so that they will not bite. Perhaps it is so. But every sin, secret or open, great or small, works death to the soul. It is full of deadly poison.

What a happy place heaven will be! No sin enters that house not made with hands. Every one that has ever passed from earth to the joys which are at God's right hand, is entirely like Christ. Blessed be God, in heaven we shall never, never sin. Satan, the tempter, never comes there. The worship of that upper temple is never marred by evil thoughts. Even on earth when we by faith see God in Christ, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. But in heaven, the work shall be finished. Not a spot shall appear on the soul of any one saved.

II.

CAIN AND ABEL.

THE first child ever born was Cain; the second, Abel. The word *Cain* signifies a *possession*. It is thought that this name was given him, because his mother hoped that he was to be a great blessing to the world. She probably looked on him as the promised Messiah. She said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." Perhaps it might better read, "I have gotten the man Jehovah." The word *Abel* signifies *vanity*. By the time he was born, his parents had learned much of the vanity of the world. Perhaps too, Cain had begun to show signs of those wicked dispositions, which clearly proved that he was not the seed of the woman, who was to bruise the serpent's head. Before his fall, Adam had wisely given names to all the creatures that

God had made. Now that he was a sinner, he knew not how to give fit names even to his own children. Cain was far more a *vanity* than Abel. Abel was a far richer *possession* than Cain. A bad man may have a good name. Many a base man has been called George Washington.

Cain was a tiller of the ground. It is probable that he made good crops, and was quite a thrifty farmer. His garners may have been well filled. Abel was a keeper of sheep. His chief business was the care of his flocks. No doubt God blessed him in his labour. Of the early history of these two persons, we know nothing now. They were both instructed in the true religion. They both knew that Jehovah was the living God. "In process of time," or, at the end of days, meaning, as some think, at the end of the year, each of them made an offering to God. Here the real difference between them appeared. They both worshipped the Lord. They both sacrificed. The worship of one may have been as costly, as decent, and as solemn

as that of the other. Yet their worship was very different. Their hearts were not in the same state. God cares nothing for mere forms, nor for the splendour of religious rites. Rivers of oil, the gold of Ophir, and the cattle on a thousand hills are his already.

The kinds of offering were different. Cain's was at most a thank-offering; but Abel's was a sin-offering. Cain did not confess that he was guilty and needed pardon. Far from this, he was proud and self-sufficient. He thought very well of himself. He had no sins to confess. He was not bowed down under a sense of his vileness. He wept no tears of penitence. He was willing, after a fashion, to give thanks for temporal mercies.

On the other hand, Abel was humble. He felt that he was a sinner, and needed a Saviour. He saw that he had broken the perfect law of God. He felt that that law was good in its precept, and good in its penalty. Abel saw that there was no hope for him, except in atoning blood, of which the blood of a lamb was a type.

Cain does not seem to have felt that God had any strong claims upon him. He denied that the Lord had a right to prescribe the worship which was to be offered him. Neither by word nor deed did Cain make any confessions. He was willing to pay such worship as his parents might have offered in Eden, before their fall. A great defect of his service was his entire want of regard to the character of God as holy, just, true, and righteous, hating sin, and yet offering mercy by Jesus Christ.

But Abel had his eye turned to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. He saw Christ's day, and rejoiced in it. His mind was fixed on the Redeemer, which should yet stand upon the earth.

The great difference between these two worshippers was that Abel had true, living faith; and Cain had none. Abel took God at his word; while Cain set up for himself. Abel obeyed; while Cain rebelled. Abel adopted the religion of sinners, because he saw that he was a sinner; Cain preferred the religion

of sinless beings, as he vainly esteemed himself such. Abel cried, God be merciful to me, a sinner; Cain came thanking God that he was a good man. In worshipping, Abel sought expiation and propitiation; Cain set up to worship God as if he were innocent like the angels in heaven. Abel relied on the great High Priest, who should yet shed his blood for the remission of the sins of many. In the sight of God, Cain denied that he needed any such sacrifice. All worship which leaves out of view the work of Christ for us, is worthless. God justly rejects us, when we reject his Son.

Abel and his worship were accepted. Cain and his worship were rejected. The offering of neither of them merited anything. But through grace, God accepted Abel and his offering; while he justly rejected Cain, because his sacrifice was an insult. It was false and heartless. It was a reproach to Christ. God accepted the offering of Abel, and rejected that of Cain in some manner that was well understood. The sign in such

cases often was that fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice which God approved; while the rejected offering was not burned. Cain clearly understood that God did not approve his course. He as clearly saw that his brother Abel was a friend of God. Thus malice sprang up in the heart of the older brother.

His bosom was filled with cruel wrath. He had good cause to be displeased with himself: he had no right to find fault with God or with Abel.

Hatred is murder in the heart. Cain was not held in check by the fear of God. His envy racked his bosom. He sought and took the life of his younger brother, and that because he was a child of God. Thus Abel became the first martyr in the cause of truth. He, being dead, yet speaketh to us. On his death his soul went up to worship around the throne of God. He never has been sorry for all he did and suffered in the cause of God. He has long beheld the face of that Jesus, whose death he, by faith, foresaw. He is

blessed forever. No tear ever drops from his eye. No sorrow ever presses his heart. He is glorified with Christ, whom he honoured in life and in death. He gave to God the firstlings of his flock. Better than all he gave to God his life, his heart, his soul.

Cain has the fearful distinction of having shed the first human blood. For that crime he was expelled from the church of God. But even against this mild sentence he rebelled, saying, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." He was left in the world as a warning to men not to commit murder. He lived a long time, and left many children; but as far as we know, his whole career was that of a wicked man. Long since, he passed from earth and stood before the Judge of all. If he died in his sins, how dreadful his doom.

III.

NAMES GIVEN TO THE WICKED.

In the Bible we read of the children of Belial, and of the sons of Belial, 1 Kings xxi. 13, 1 Sam. xxv. 17, 2 Sam. xxiii. 6. The word *Belial* signifies *without profit.* A child of Belial is one who is worthless, bad, wicked. The word Belial is in the Bible rendered *wicked,* Ps. ci. 3, *evil,* Ps. xli. 8, *ungodly,* Prov. xvi. 27, and *naughty,* Prov. vi. 12.

Because worthlessness is followed by destruction, Belial came to signify destruction. In the New Testament, Belial clearly means Satan, 2 Cor. vi. 15. All the wicked are children of Belial.

Sometimes the wicked are called children of the devil. Satan is the great foe of God and man. He is the chief of the fallen angels. He is cruel and has no pity. He

seeks to do all the harm he can. He is a liar, an accuser, a murderer. Because he has great power, he is called the prince of this world, and the god of this world. Through a serpent he tempted Adam and Eve, and so he is called the dragon, that old serpent, the devil. Because he seeks to frighten people from that which is good, he is called a roaring lion. Because in evil, he excels all others, he is called that Wicked One. To be a child of the devil is to be like the devil, false, cruel, deceitful, malignant, hating God and man. The devil has many children in this world. They do as he bids them. They love what he loves, and hate what he hates. Thus they are his children, John viii. 44. The proud, the fierce, the malicious, the cunning, the bloody are all the children of the devil. Many men, alas, even on earth bear a great deal more of the image of the devil and of the brute, than they do of likeness to God.

Sometimes the wicked are called the children of hell, Matt. xxiii. 15. Hell is the abode of fallen angels and of lost men. A

child of hell, therefore, is one who has the spirit of those who are in hell. It is an awful thought that, by their sins, men often make earth very much like hell.

We are all by nature the children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3. The meaning is, we are born under a curse. This is the fruit of original sin. The guilt and vileness of our state at birth are dreadful.

Sometimes the wicked are called strange children, Ps. cxliv. 7, 11. Sinners are strangers to God. They know neither the Father, nor the Son, nor the Holy Spirit. They are strangers to truth, to peace, to love, and to holiness.

It is a dreadful thing to be a sinner. All the wicked are rebels against God. They are the enemies of the Lord. They lift their puny arms against the Most High. They fight against Jehovah. They live under his curse. They may be cut down at any moment, and then they are undone forever. It were better to be a stone or a beast than to live and

die a sinner, yea, it were better never to have been born than to die out of Christ.

It is a great mercy that Christ died for us. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He did not lay down his life for friends, but for foes. His grace is rich and free, and knows no bound. Oh, that all would receive it! We all need it. Jesus Christ never casts out any that come to him, John vi. 37. He never despises the poor broken-hearted penitent. Oh come to Christ! He is the best friend young or old have. He died the just for the unjust. When on earth, he took little children in his arms and blessed them.

If up to this time, God has made you happy, give him the glory. He is the author of all your blessings. Praise him for all the good things you enjoy. They all come from his undeserved goodness. You merit none of them. Surely you owe to God many, many thanks for his great mercy. If one had no sins but those of childhood, or of manhood, or sins of the tongue, or sins against parents,

or secret sins, or sins of omission, the grace offered us, and the pity shown us, would be infinite. But when God offers to forgive *all* our sins, we might think that even the blind would see that his mercy did reach unto the heavens. Oh let us praise him!

> Had I ten thousand, thousand tongues,
> Not one should silent be;
> Had I ten thousand, thousand hearts,
> I'd give them all to thee.

We can now see why God in his word makes such terrible threatenings. It is because sin is so hateful. Many texts in the Bible might well make the wicked tremble. Here are a few of them. "God is angry with the wicked every day." "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray." The loving Saviour himself said, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." God's plan

is to give timely warnings in plain words. The Scriptures are not harsh, though they tell the truth. The reason why we find such awful language in the Bible is, that it justly portrays the danger and the doom of the wicked.

Let each one now turn to the Lord. O sinner, now is your time. Your life is a vapour. It will soon be gone forever. Why are you so little affected with eternal things? Why do the affairs of time so engross your mind? Are you blind? Are you mad? Are you dead in sin? Are you bent on ruin? Lord Jesus, open the blind eyes, cure the madness that is within us, clothe us in our right mind, reach forth thy strong hand and pluck us as brands from the burning. By thy Spirit raise us up to newness of life. Help us to live as seeing things invisible.

"Deeply on our thoughtless hearts,
Eternal things impress."

IV.

NAMES GIVEN TO THE RIGHTEOUS.

In Scripture various names are given to the pious. They are called children of God, and the children of their Father which is in heaven. In three ways, pious men are God's children.

1. By adoption. God finds them poor, helpless orphans and outcasts; and of his mere mercy and grace, he brings them into his family. Thus they become his sons, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. This is a chief act of God's love to men. In us there is nothing to merit the divine esteem. Nor can we be useful to God, as a man is useful to his fellow. Out of mere love and pity, God gives us the adoption of sons.

2. The pious are God's children by regeneration. Men are not Christians by being

born, but by being born again. We are not saints by creation, but by a new creation. This is a great work wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. It is all his own work, not ours. He says, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Ezek. xxxvi. 25–27. Nothing worse can come on old or young than to die without being born again. We must be created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, or we must lie down in sorrow.

3. The pious are God's children by imitation. In their measure they are like God. He is their great pattern. They follow him. Jesus says: "Love your enemies, bless them which curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use

you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matt. v. 44, 45. It is a great thing to imitate God.

The pious are also called children of the light, John xii. 36. This name is given to them because they have been brought out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel. They also love the light, and come to the light, that their deeds may be manifest, that they are wrought in God. Above all, they love Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world. All the pious walk in the light of truth, and in the light of hope. All the light they have comes from God by the cross and merits and person of Jesus Christ.

The pious are also called the children of wisdom, Matt. xi. 19. Sometimes wisdom is one of the names of the Saviour, who himself calls his people his children. John xxi. 5. Jesus is the everlasting Father, Isa. ix. 6, and his people are his children. But the phrase

children of wisdom is a Hebrew form of expression, and means wise children. God's people are so far wise that they prefer eternity to time, the soul to the body, heaven to earth, and God to all others. They are wise in laying up treasure in heaven, in forsaking the world, in dying unto sin, and in living unto God. All men, whether saved or lost, will at the last day say that none but the righteous are truly wise. They are wise for themselves. They are wise unto salvation.

God's people are called little children, 1 John iv. 4. They are *little* because they are as nothing compared with God their Father, with Christ their Saviour, or with the Holy Spirit, their Comforter. They are little because in themselves they are feeble and helpless. And they are little in their own esteem, less than the least of all God's mercies. And then they are like little children, Matt. xviii. 3, Mark x. 15, Luke xviii. 17.

1. Little children are *docile*. They do not deny the truth of what their good parents tell them. They are willing to learn. They

cry after knowledge, and lift up their voice for understanding. They buy the truth at any price. They often cry, Teach me thy statutes, O Lord.

2. Little children are *humble*. Their hearts are not puffed up with pride. The little child of the king plays on equal terms with the little child of his nurse. Like their Saviour, God's people are lowly. They do not say to others, "Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou." They do not trust in themselves that they are righteous and despise others.

3. They are *meek* and not spiteful. They hate *strife*. It grieves them to the heart to contend with men. Not one of them "would give an hour of brotherly love for a whole eternity of contention."

4. Little children are *forgiving*. They do not carry grudges. The sun does not go down upon their wrath, nor is their anger outrageous. So God's people forgive. Yes, they forgive and they forget.

And God's people are little compared with what they shall be, 1 John iii. 2. As Christ

in his exaltation differs very much from Christ in his humiliation, not in heart but in state, not in person but in glory, so shall it be with all his people.

The righteous are also called children of the resurrection, Luke xx. 36. To them, not to the wicked, it will be a blessing to be raised from the dead. They will come forth with unspeakable and everlasting joy. They shall have part in the first resurrection, 1 Thess. iv. 16, Rev. xx. 6.

These are a few of the names which God gives to those that love him. There are many others just as precious. All of them show how loving the Lord is, and how dear his people are to him.

Are we meet to bear such names? Do we love God, his law, his children, his worship? If we die as we now are, shall we be saved?

It is a great thing to be a child of God. Nothing can harm such in this world or the next. None can pluck them out of the Saviour's hand. They shall have heaven at last, with all its infinite blessings.

V.

HOW YOU MAY KNOW A CHILD.

EVERY child is making for himself a good or a bad name. No boy or girl walks abroad without making some impression on beholders. In a court of law the character of a child could readily be established by the neighbours. They know who is gentle and who is fierce, who is mean and who is noble, who is modest and who is impudent, who is wise and who is foolish. You may know a child.

But you cannot know him by his size. There is many a great, big fool, and many a sweet, little darling. It is very well to be tall and strong, if God makes us so. But King Saul who was head and shoulders above his nation, was a poor creature, while Saul of Tarsus, whom all tradition represents as a

small man, was one of the noblest specimens of human nature.

Nor can you know a child by his looks. Some children, who have very homely faces, have fine characters; and some whose faces are very pretty, show by their conduct that they have very bad hearts. When God sent Samuel to anoint one of Jesse's sons, that great prophet thought that Eliab was the one that God had chosen. But he was mistaken. The Lord said to him: "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Absalom was a fine-looking man; but no man is found to admire his character. A pleasant face and a right heart do not always go together.

Nor can you tell a child by his talk. The speech of some children is as smooth as butter; but the poison of asps is under their lips. They use many fair words; but they are guilty of foul deeds. They make great promises;

but they do not keep them. They abound in professions, but their practice is bad. Words are cheap. They do not prove anything.

Nor can a child be known by his parents. They may be very worthy people, and yet he may be vile and wicked. Sometimes the parents are the evil ones, while their children fear and love God.

Nor can you tell a child by his clothes. The butterfly is very gay in its dress; yet it is nothing but a vile caterpillar that has lately gotten wings. The finest furs are taken from vermin. Good clothing is a great comfort. If we have it, we should be thankful for it; but vice is often clad in the best suits, and virtue goes in patched clothes.

And yet a child may be known; yea, he is known by his doings. Prov. xx. 11.

1. You may know him by the companions he *chooses*. A good boy may be thrown among bad ones; but he does not love to mingle with them. A dear, sweet girl may live for awhile with others of an opposite

character; but they are not her boon companions. But when you see a child willing to be alone rather than to go with the wicked, find him seeking to be with those who are kind and gentle, and fear God, there is great hope of him.

2. A child may be known by the books he *selects*. If he loves nothing but vain stories, or idle songs, there is not much hope of him. It is a sad sign when a child cares nothing for sound knowledge, and thinks every book dull, if it teaches true wisdom. But we cannot fail to expect good of the child that loves good books; and especially the best of all books, the book of books, the Bible.

3. A child may be known by the way he acts in *school*. If he is sly and cunning, if he slights his lessons, if he is rude to his school-mates, and impudent to his teacher; then you may know that not much good is likely to come of him. But if he is true and earnest, if he tries his best every day, if he is respectful to his teacher, there is not much risk in being surety for him.

4. You may know a good deal about a child when you see him *at play*. If he cheats, if he does not play fairly, if he does little mean things, if he is easily made angry, if he is ready to quarrel, if he does not stand up for the truth, even when it is against him or those on his side; there is great danger that things will not end well with him. But if he owns up to all that happens against him, if when he does wrong, he says so in a manly way, if he finds his pleasure in being open and truthful, come what will, then mark that boy. He shall not stand among mean men.

5. A child may be known by the way he behaves *in God's house*. The church is no place to sleep in. We should not go there to gaze idly about, much less to whisper, or smile, or play. It is a sin when young people behave so that older ones must reprove them. But when a child goes to God's house, listens to what is said, loves the truth and in his heart worships God, and thinks the Sabbath the best day of the week; then you may know that he is growing up to be worth something.

6. You may often find out a child when he is *sick*. If he is peevish, fretful, will not take his medicine, is angry with his kind nurse and with his good doctor, and will not obey his parents, and lie in bed when he ought to do so, then you may be justly afraid that all is not right with him. But when in sickness, he makes the best of every thing, and does not willingly give needless trouble, but is quiet and gentle, then you may think well of him.

VI.

CHILDREN SHOULD KNOW THE SCRIPTURES.

"THE Bible is a lake along the shores of which a lamb may wade; but in the midst of it an elephant may swim." In the Scriptures is milk for babes, as well as meat for strong men. The Bible is full of things that suit children. It tells them of God, and of duty, of sin and of its fruits, of heaven and of hell. It abounds in stories well suited to impress truth on the mind and heart. It tells of the love of God in giving his Son Jesus Christ to die for poor sinners. It inspires salutary hopes and fears. It rids us of such as are idle. It is the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. Children ought to know the Scriptures.

I. It is the duty of parents to teach God's word. Of course it is the duty of children to learn it. Hear what God says:

"These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house, and on thy gates." Deut. vi. 6–9. So that nothing is clearer than that children are to be familiarly and carefully instructed in the Scriptures.

II. One of the most useful preachers in the days of Paul was Timothy. His father was a Greek; his mother was a Jewess. This young minister did and suffered much for the gospel. He was very useful. He loved Paul and Paul loved him. The faith and prayers and teachings of Timothy's mother and grandmother were honored as the means of his salvation. They did not put off teaching him till sin and ignorance had made his heart

hard. No! Paul says to him, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. iii. 15. One of the best ways to train up a right sort of Christians and ministers is to teach them God's Word when they are young.

III. Jesus himself said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." John v. 39. When Christ thus spake, there were no Scriptures, but those books which we now call The Old Testament, in which are many things dark and difficult. Surely the New Testament is more clear than the old. Yet Jesus said, *Search the Scriptures.* If men had believed Moses, they would have believed Christ. John v. 46.

Many other things prove that it is the duty of all to learn God's will as made known in the Bible.

But if children would know the Scriptures so as to be wise unto salvation, they must

have a right spirit. This can come from God only. Many who know the truth wickedly trifle with it. Let us then:

1. Greatly fear God. When the lion roars, the lesser animals are said to keep silence. If the king of the forest is thus feared, surely the voice of the King of kings should make us afraid. Let us serve God with reverence and with godly fear.

2. Let our fear be mingled with love—a love that brings us nigh to God, that holds him fast, and will not let him go. Mere fear will drive us away from the Most High, and mere love will sink into fondness; but love and fear united will keep us in a right state.

3. Then we must think of what we learn. We must con it over and over again. Children are bound to reflect. Their minds were given them for that end. If God shall ever save us, he will put us to thinking on the truth and on his claims upon us.

4. If we would learn aright, we must pray. He who made us can rightly teach us. If he loves us, he will certainly not give us up to

folly. His promise to the church is: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." Isa. liv. 13. Let children learn to pray. Light and life come from God.

5. Children should believe all that God says. In young or old, unbelief is very wicked. Without faith it is impossible to please God. The Bible is not a book of dreams, or of fables. It is full of truth which we are bound to love.

6. Children should practise what they learn. Practice makes perfect. He that does as well as he knows will know better and better.

If any child has no Bible of his own, let him ask for one, or let him sell all his toys and buy one. Let him keep it with care. Let him read it daily. It is better to lack anything else than to be without God's word.

It is a solemn thing to have a chance to know the truths of the Bible, and yet not to learn them; or to know what the Bible teaches, and yet have no heart to do it. In the day of judgment it will be better to have

been a poor heathen, who never heard of Christ than to have been born in a Christian land, and to have lived and died in sin. To every child God says, "Give me thy heart." We ought to know and love and serve the great and good Being that made us. He has a right to our hearts. It is very wicked not to know and love God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

The Bible can teach children how to live. It is a light that shineth in darkness. It shows us the way in which we should walk. It has lit up the path of thousands.

Then, too, it can help us to die. Its truths have cheered many a child about to bid farewell to earth. In a heathen land, a few years since, a boy died happily among strangers. A missionary coming to the town, where his body was a corpse, heard of him, and asked the people what he said and did. They told him that the boy talked of one Jesus, and had a little book which he pressed to his bosom, and asked that it might be put under his head, when he was buried. The little book was one

of the Gospels. Jesus did not forsake the poor little boy dying among strangers. A thousand times he has helped little children to die.

VII.

FAITH IN CHRIST.

TRUE faith is a great gift of God. It is a precious grace. By it is the life of the soul. It is a rich fruit of Christ's mediation. He is its Author and Finisher. He is its cause and its object. The agent who works faith in us is the Holy Spirit. He glorifies Christ by bringing us to put all our trust in him.

What is faith in Christ? What does one do when he believes on the Son of God? On this point many err. The learned and the ignorant may here make a sad mistake. The matter is of great weight. Let every one be candid with his own soul.

Sometimes faith is called *coming to Christ.* Jesus himself so speaks of it: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest;" "Him that cometh

to me I will in no wise cast out." To come to Christ is to have such a state of heart as would lead one, if Christ were on earth, to come to him in person, and ask him for grace and mercy on his own terms. One poor woman came to him very stealthily, she was very much afraid, but she came and touched him and got the blessing. The Canaanitish woman came with a very low esteem of herself, but she was not offended in Christ. Nothing could drive her away from him. So we must feel as these women did. It is right for us to have a deep sense of our sins, but we must rely on Christ.

Sometimes faith is called *looking to Christ.* "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else;" "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced;" "Run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus." Of old the Israelites, bitten by the fiery serpent, were bidden to direct their eyes to the brazen serpent; and as many as looked were healed. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in

the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Children, do you hear that? Is it not good news? Did you ever hear better?

To have faith in Christ is to *receive* him. Thus Zaccheus received him not only civilly as his guest, and kindly as his countryman, but joyfully as his Saviour. Christ is freely offered, and we gladly take him as offered. He is held out to us in the gospel, and we lay hold of him as the Lord our righteousness, as the true God and eternal life, as all our salvation. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

Again, faith in Christ is spoken of as *fleeing* to him. We flee from our sins and from the avenging wrath of God to lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel. Christ is our city of refuge. In him we are safe from the flaming sword of justice. He is our hiding-place from the tempest, our covert from the storm. We run to him, and his

blood atones for us, his righteousness covers us, his grace is sufficient for us, his intercession avails for us. In him we can never be reached by the destroyer.

Those that have faith in Christ *rest* in him. Their faith reposes on him. They lean upon him. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth." This true faith in Christ has some remarkable characteristics.

1. It refuses all other helps, hopes, refuges and mediators. It divides not its love and confidence between Christ and a host of others, or any other. "Thou must save, and thou alone." To look elsewhere is inconsistent with reliance upon him. He saves wholly, or not at all. His blood may not be mingled with our sufferings, nor his tears with our anguish, nor his merits with our deservings. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." "Other foundation can no man lay." Build on the Rock, or not at all.

2. Genuine faith is not temporary, but lasts and holds on its way. It cleaves to Christ

through good and through evil report. It holds him fast, and will not let him go. It will even bear tortures, not accepting deliverance purchased by a denial of faith in him. It will walk in darkness, and yet trust. It will cover itself with sackcloth and ashes, and cry, Unclean; but it will not renounce Christ. It is not only exclusive, it is also firm.

3. It enlists all the affections. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Devils believe, but not with the heart. "The act of faith is not in the brain, but in the heart."

4. Genuine faith therefore purifies the heart. It begets strong desires after holiness. It leads the soul to Christ, who is our sanctification as well as our righteousness. It begets the deepest aversion to sin. When tempted it cries, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" In the eyes of believers, sin is exceeding sinful, and holiness very lovely.

5. True faith in Christ also works by love. It draws its chief motives from the divine

love. It awakens the affection of love in the soul. It says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us," and then it gives him all that it has, or is, or hopes to be.

6. It also gains and keeps the ascendency over the things of time. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Faith looks not at things which are seen and temporal, but at things unseen and eternal. It draws its strength and firmness from the sight of things invisible—from an unseen Saviour, an unseen heaven, and an unseen eternity.

It is not strange that true Christians make much of faith. The Bible does the same. "He that believeth shall be saved." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." "This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ."

Whoever truly believes is sure to love God and all his word, his worship and his people.

Faith is never alone. It is only one of the Christian graces, but it is a great grace.

Whoever thus believes shall be saved. Faith unites to Christ.

Want of faith is a great sin. God abhors unbelief. It is the master sin of the human heart. It heeds and fosters all wickedness. No sin is alone; but the want of faith is the parent of all sins. If this sin were renounced, others could not reign. How many Israelites through unbelief perished in the wilderness. "He that believeth not shall be damned."

It is a glad truth that Christ is now ready to receive sinners. The door is open. Oh come to Christ. Children as truly need his grace as do old people. Christ is as truly ready to receive them as to receive their parents. Come to Christ. There is no other way of escape. "Faith is, to the lost sinner, what the life-boat is to the shipwrecked sailor, dashing among the breakers—his only means of escape from certain death." Oh, enter the life-boat. Now is your time. If you refuse, your blood will be upon yourself.

VIII.

A VISIT TO MY OLD HOME.

SOME years ago, I went to see some of my kin. They lived where I had spent most of my childhood. A thousand thoughts rushed on my mind as I passed over the walks of my early life. The houses were not near so high, nor the streets so wide as I had once thought them. Trees that I had planted with my own hands had grown old and died. The graveyard was sadly filled up. I sat down and thought thus:

How short is life! It is a vapour, a shadow, a tale that is told. Fifty years have passed since I roamed over these fields, and bathed in these waters, and yet that whole time seems like a dream. All flesh is grass. Most of the companions of my early life have already gone beyond the bounds of time.

Soon earth will know none of us any more forever.*

How certain is death. None escape. The young and healthy may die; the old and sickly must. None can long withstand the assaults of disease. The grave-yard has filled up wonderfully.

How fixed are the principles of God's government. He never changes them. It is as true now as ever before, that bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; that those who honour father and mother shall be greatly blessed on earth, that the hand of the diligent maketh rich; that he that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it. Indeed, every principle of God's government remains unchanged.

How surely truth will triumph at last. I have seen many forsaken, slandered, and scorned, outliving all their enemies, and by well-doing putting to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Well did good old Boston

* "Time," said a deaf mute, "is a line that has two ends —a path which begins in the cradle and ends in the tomb."

say: "Leave your character where you have trusted your soul; your Maker will take care of both." Silent and quiet endurance of revilings is better than all heated and fierce contentions.

How vain a pursuit is wealth. It brings misery to its devotee and to his offspring. I know no more mournful histories than those connected with greediness of gain. I think it is John Owen, who somewhere says, "There is nothing given us in more strict charge in the Scripture, than that we should be careful for nothing, solicitous about nothing, take no thought for to-morrow, but commit all things unto the sovereign disposal of God our Father, who has taken all these things into his own care." It is idle to pretend that we have given all to God, when we are so eager to manage them ourselves.

A life of self-denial was never more sure than in this age to do good. A little work done in the right way tells for a long time. A poor child taught in the right way, a good

institution founded in a small way grows. When I was young I felt like transplanting trees. I have quit that and gone to planting acorns. We may be poor, yet make many rich. Great usefulness follows, not great talents, or great donations, but great self-denial. Christ saved the world by suffering. No man has been distinguished for usefulness, who was not remarkable for sufferings, for voluntary self-denial.

How priceless is a good name. To men themselves and to their posterity it is better than great riches. It outlives its possessor and his children. Let one go over any community, which he knew a quarter of a century ago, and he will know what is here meant.

How wise it is to fear God and to teach all around us to do the same. Nothing, as an element of education or of self-government, is sufficient, if men despise the authority of God.

How strangely the world is ruled by little things I think it was Alice Carey, who said,

"Little drops of rain brighten the meadows, and little acts of kindness brighten the world." Eternity is made up of successive points in duration.

And how soon earthly joy and pomp and vanity will all be gone. "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree. Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not, yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."

How soon the sorrows of the just will be over. The greatest sufferers I ever knew have long been at rest. They wept on the mountains of Zion. They shout in the streets of the new Jerusalem.

How rapidly our opportunities of usefulness to ourselves and others are passing away. Oh that we had grace to improve them as they come. "Our opportunities, like our souls, are very precious; but if they are lost, they are irrecoverably lost." How many, whom I might once have warned, are forever beyond the calls of the gospel.

How the whole coast of time is strewed

with wrecks. One is ruined by drink, another by bad company, another by idleness, another by skepticism, another by lying, another by lewdness.

How humility stands the test. It boasts not. It vaunts not itself. It loves retirement, as the violet loves the shade. "Though civility teaches us to call others by their highest titles, yet humility teaches us to call ourselves by the lowest." "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

How priceless a blessing is love. It warms the heart in which it dwells. It blesses all around it. "Like spring flowers, it breaks through the most frozen ground at last." It makes many happy. A family brought up in snappish, snarlish ways, will live in wretchedness, and comes to naught.

It is safe to obey any call of duty, to take up any cross, endure any reproach, follow any lawful calling. Those men at the top were not long since at the bottom, but however situated, they did their duty, and the blessing followed.

What a poor thing is a pompous, vain profession of Christianity. Piety, which does not rule us, will not save us. If there is in our hearts and lives no difference between us and sinners, there will be no difference between us and them in doom and destiny.

What a priceless boon is youth. As men and women are at fifty, so were they at fifteen, is generally true. Good and bad qualities are always developing themselves.

How weak are the moral principles of many. Walpole said, "Every man has his price." This is not always so. Yet many are badly sold. "Those, who fancy that money can do anything, are generally prepared to do everything for money." In her journal Eliza Cook says, that they who are honest, only because honesty is the best policy, are half way to being rogues. What small temptations have ruined those of my acquaintance, who have lost all.

Who understand the power of education? That poor creature, now suffering from ennui and chagrin, full of suspicion and malice,

was by her parents trained to think display the end of existence. That young man, who was petted, indulged, taught to swagger about honour, and to make high pretensions to the character of a gentleman, is now hardly a fit companion for the dogs of his neighbour's flock. He was spoiled in the rearing.

True religion is full of unfailing resources. That alone is enough. Its triumphs among many of my old friends have been as remarkable as in the case of Payson, who when suffering great pain just before death, said, "Oh, what a blessed thing it is to lose one's will! Since I have lost my will, I have found happiness. There can be no such thing as disappointment to me, for I have no desires but that God's will may be accomplished."

What a Saviour we have in the Lord Jesus Christ! How wisdom and tenderness, power and love, grace and truth, shine out in him. "He is still in office for us; he pleads our cause before his Father; he rules the universe for our welfare; and he teaches us wisdom." Blessed one! how we ought to love him.

If we are in Christ, what a blessed meeting we shall soon have with all the redeemed in glory. Many of the best friends I ever had are gone before me. I sympathize with good old Richard Baxter when he says: "I must confess, as the experience of my own soul, that the expectation of loving my friends in heaven principally kindles my love to them while on earth. If I thought I should never know them, and consequently never love them after this life is ended, I should number them with temporal things, and love them as such; but I now converse with my pious friends in a firm persuasion that I shall converse with them forever; I take comfort in those that are dead or absent, believing that I shall shortly meet them in heaven, and love them with a heavenly love." It would be easy to make out a list of such old friends large enough to cover many pages. Their memory is precious. I hope soon to see them, and unite with them in singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

IX.

DO ALL THE GOOD YOU CAN.

Don't say that you cannot do much, and therefore you will do nothing. Keep trying. Work away. The ants are little things, but in some parts of the world, they build great houses for themselves. Very little worms sometimes eat up a large forest. The ocean is made up of drops of water and the world of grains of sand. Any good little child can make glad a father or mother, and that is a great thing. I have known a dear little child not five years old to soothe the throbbing, aching head of its mother.

Every one can do something. This is proven in many ways. I will tell you a true story.

As one travels westward from Pittsburgh towards Chicago, he will find, from Wayne

County, Ohio, to Fort Wayne, Indiana, traditions of a singular man, known now as formerly by the name of "Sammy Appleseed." He wore no hat, and seldom, if ever, wore shoes. His clothing was mean and scant. He was not known to have any kindred in the land. He spent his time partly among the Indians and partly among the whites. He was hardly half-witted. He was entirely harmless. He was an enemy to no one. No one was an enemy to him. He travelled a great deal, usually with a bag on his shoulder.

At the time of making cider, he commonly went into Eastern Pennsylvania. He would then carefully gather a peck or more of apple-seeds, and start for the West. The severe weather of winter he generally spent in the white settlements, but early in the spring he was off for the wilderness. He was familiar with the trails of the country, and could find his way to the Indian towns. Wherever he went he carried his bag of apple-seeds. Whereever he found a fit opening, he would plant some of them. This he did not only at the

old deserted villages, but also at the inhabited towns of the savages. Sometimes he would get a promise that the weeds and grass should be kept from smothering the young trees. But usually they had to take their chance for life.

Thus, for a space of two hundred miles in length and forty or fifty miles in breadth, this simple man produced some of the first signs of advancing civilization. When the white people moved into the wilderness, they found nurseries of apple-trees, neither pruned nor grafted, but ready to be transplanted. In some cases they were already bearing fruit, which, mellowed by age, became delicious.

Sammy has been dead for many years; but for generations to come he will be spoken of as a benefactor to a large district of country. He did what he could for the comfort of the red man and of the white man. Having no bad designs, he was neither suspicious nor suspected. Though his life was often in jeopardy, he was kept alive. In his labours he found his happiness. He had his reward.

In the labours of this man, every child may learn a lesson. All who read these pages probably have as much mind as Sammy had. They ought to try as hard to do good. If they humbly look to God for strength, their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

Coming generations will bless them, and bless God for them. Little Samuel serving God in the temple and doing as God and Eli bade him, is mentioned with more honour than all the Pharaohs of Egypt.

Let none of us live to himself. Let us continually scatter good seeds. By and by they will bear good fruit. All that we now enjoy is the result of something done for us by others, perhaps by others long since dead. Of those who stand in their lot and do their best for the good of man and the glory of God, we may say, as a modern poet says of *great* men:

> Lives of great men all remind us
> We can make our lives sublime,
> And, departing, leave behind us
> Footprints on the sands of time—

Footprints that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for every fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. In due time we shall reap if we faint not. Let us have long patience and wait for the precious fruits of the earth.

X.

THE CHILD THAT WAS READY TO PERISH.

THE father of Ishmael was Abraham. His mother's name was Hagar, the Egyptian. Troubles arose in Abraham's family. Sarah, the mother of Isaac said to Abraham, Cast out this bond-woman, and her son: for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. This made Abraham very sad. But God said, Of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. Hagar left Abraham's house with a heavy heart and with a bottle of water. After a while, the water gave out, and Hagar cast her child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat down over against him a good way off, that she might not see him die. She was sad and wept aloud, and so did her son. And God heard the voice of the

lad and sent an angel to comfort him and his mother. He also promised, I will make him a great nation. And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. He also married an Egyptian and became famous in his day as a man of the woods.

From him have descended a very numerous people, who have long borne the name of Arabians. From the days of Ishmael there has been a wild romance in the history and character of this people. To this day, many of them lead a wandering life. Soon after the ascension of Christ to heaven, many Arabs embraced the truth as it is in Jesus. There were zealous Christians among them. After a while these converts became very corrupt. Then there arose a great impostor, Mohammed. From that time their history has been full of the most painful interest. Their deeds contain the strongest exhibitions of temper and principle. This is owing to two causes: the natural character of the people; and the influence of their system of religious belief. It

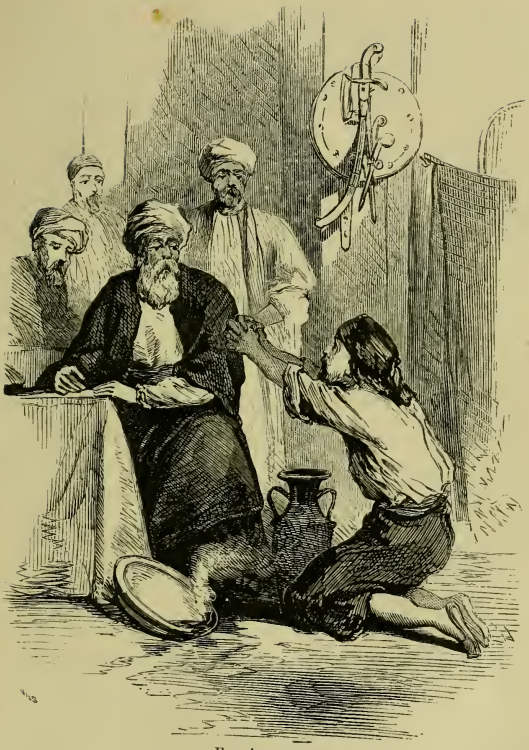
may be interesting to the reader to have some of the views of the Arabs stated.

Mohammed laid this down as a great truth: "The sword is the key of heaven and of hell: a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting and prayer; whosoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven; at the day of judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermillion, and odoriferous as musk; and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and cherubims." This one sentence has ever since had an influence almost inconceivable. No Arab ever enters into a bloody contest but as an enthusiast. Here is the secret of the rapid spread of the imposture.

At the taking of Mecca, Mohammed united the factions, and would take no revenge. The Koreish fell at his feet. "What mercy," said he. "can you expect from the men you have wronged?" "We confide in the generosity of our kinsman," was the reply. "And you shall not confide in vain," said he: "Begone! you are safe, you are free."

When the deputies of Tayef asked for a toleration of their religion, he said, "Not a month, not an hour." Then they said, "Excuse us at least from the obligation of prayer." His reply was, "Without prayer religion is of no avail."

When his soldiers complained of the intolerable heat of a summer campaign, he replied, "Hell is much hotter." Just before his death he caused himself to be put on a pulpit, when he said, "If there be any man whom I have unjustly scourged, I submit my own back to the lash of retaliation. Have I aspersed the reputation of a Mussulman? Let him proclaim my faults in the face of the congregation. Has any one been despoiled of his goods?" "Yes," replied one in the crowd, "I am entitled to three drachms of silver." Mohammed paid him his money and thanked him for accusing him here and not at the day of judgment. His last words were: "O God! . . . . pardon my sins. . . Yes. . . I come . . . . among my fellow-citizens on high." He died at the age of sixty-seven years, having effected greater



Forgiveness.

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and more permanent changes in the opinions and habits of men, by the sword united with fanaticism, than were ever effected by any man with either of these means alone or by them united.

There is something very striking in some of the usages of his followers, even to this day. They at times seem to come very near the Christian temper in the forgiveness of injuries, although they are habitually revengeful. Their pardons seem to be very much confined to slight things and accidental wrongs. The following story is told of one of the sons of Ali. In serving at table, a slave had inadvertently dropped a dish of hot soup on his master. The poor wretch fell at his feet and repeated a verse of the Koran: "Paradise is for those who command their anger." "I am not angry," said he. "And for those who pardon offences," continued the slave. "I pardon your offence," said the master. "And for those who return good for evil," added the slave. "I give you your liberty and four hundred pieces of silver," said the master.

This is the brightest example of anything like forgiveness that I remember to have met in all their history. Almost innumerable examples of their cruelty, even to persons of their own blood and religion, might be given.

Every Arab is bound by his religion to pay a tenth of all his revenue in some way to a benevolent purpose; and if his conscience accuses him of any fraud or injustice, he must pay a fifth. They are said very generally to practise this precept.

Some of their dignitaries have set remarkable examples of plainness, and others of splendour. Omar II. spent his last days on a bed of palm leaves, with a pillow made of the skins of beasts, and with but one shirt. Heshom, who came soon after him, was just the reverse. He left ten thousand shirts, and seven hundred boxes of various garments.

No one can read the history of this people without feeling that they are distinct from all the world in many respects. Indulgence and cruelty seem to be the result of caprice. Shrewdness is chiefly applied to evasions,

cunning and fraud. The stronger their religious impressions, the more dangerous do they seem to be, as long as health and success last. Their habits of cooking and eating, of hospitality and of revenge, do not seem to have changed at all for two thousand five hundred years, or more.

But they shall yet be brought to love the Saviour. When that blessed event shall take place is known unto God alone. But that it shall occur is certain, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The whole of the following prophecy in Isaiah lx. 6, 7, applies to this people. "The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee; the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee."

When the day of deliverance from imposture shall come to the Arabs, their conversion will probably be very speedy. The words next following those just quoted are, "Who

are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" Isaiah lx. 8.

Children, do you ever pray for the Arabs? Their souls are worth as much as those of any other people. If you ever hear them mentioned at a missionary meeting, listen carefully to what is said. Pray for them, O pray for them. Though Ishmael was not the child of promise, he was the son of Abraham.

XI.

MEROH, THE AFRICAN.

In the fall of 1826 I went to Wilmington, N. C., to preach a few Sabbaths in the Presbyterian church. While there I was visited by a venerable man, a native of Africa. He came to the door of my room, entered, and approached me. I rose to receive him. He took my hand between both of his, and earnestly pressed it to his bosom. Our interview was not long, but I received very deep impressions of his moral worth, and of his true refinement of feeling produced by the grace of God.

I have met him once or twice since, but was commonly hindered from learning much respecting him, as he was much more inclined to hear than to speak—to ask questions than to answer them. Yet from him and from others I have learned the following things.

Meroh was born about the year 1770. If he is still living, as he was by last advices, he is over ninety years of age. He was born on the banks of the Senegal river, in Eastern Africa. His tribe were the Foolahs. Their religion was Mahommedanism. Many of them had the Koran and read and wrote the Arabic language. I have now in my possession a letter written by Meroh in Arabic, bearing all the marks of expert penmanship.

I write his name Meroh. It was originally Umeroh. Some write it Moro; and some put it in the French form, Moreau. It is commonly pronounced as if spelled Moro.

Meroh's father in Africa was a man of considerable wealth. He brought up his children delicately. Meroh's fingers are rather effeminate. They are very well tapered. His whole person and gait bear marks of considerable refinement.

At about five years of age he lost his father, in one of those bloody wars that are almost constantly raging in Africa. Very soon thereafter he was taken by an uncle to the capital

of the tribe. Here he learned and afterwards taught the Arabic, especially some prayers used by Mahommedans. He also learned some rules of arithmetic, and many of the forms of business. When a young man he became a dealer in the merchandise of the country, chiefly consisting in cotton cloths. Some years since I saw in some newspaper an account of this man, which I believe to be quite correct. I make an extract:—

"While engaged in trade, some event occurred, which he is very reluctant to refer to, but which resulted in his being sold into slavery. He was brought down to the coast, shipped for America, in company with only two who could speak the same language, and was landed at Charleston in 1807, just a year previous to the final abolition of the slave-trade. He was soon sold to a citizen of Charleston, who treated him with great kindness, but who, unfortunately for Moreau, died in a short time. He was then sold to one who proved to be a harsh, cruel master, exacting from him labour which he had not the strength

to perform. From him Moreau found means to escape, and after wandering nearly over the State of South Carolina, was found near Fayetteville, in North Carolina. Here he was taken up as a runaway, and placed in the jail. Knowing nothing of the language as yet, he could not tell who he was, or where he was from, but finding some coals in the ashes, he filled the walls of his room with piteous petitions to be released, all written in the Arabic language. The strange characters, so elegantly and correctly written by a runaway slave, soon attracted attention, and many of the citizens of the town visited the jail to see him.

"Through the agency of Mr. Mumford, then sheriff of Cumberland county, the case of Moreau was brought to the notice of Gen. James Owen, of Bladen county, a gentleman well known throughout this Commonwealth, for his public services, and always known as a man of generous and humane impulses. He took Moreau out of jail, becoming security for his forthcoming, if called for, and carried

him with him to his plantation in Bladen county. For a long time his wishes were baffled by the meanness and the cupidity of a man who had bought the runaway at a small price from his former master, until at last he was able to obtain legal possession of him, greatly to the joy of Moreau. Since then, for more than forty years, he has been a trusted and indulged servant.

"At the time of his purchase by General Owen, Moreau was a staunch Mahommedan, and, the first year at least, kept the fast of Rhamadan with great strictness. Through the kindness of some friends, an English translation of the Koran was procured for him, and read to him, often with portions of the Bible. Gradually he seemed to lose his interest in the Koran, and to show more interest in the Sacred Scriptures, until he finally gave up his faith in Mahomet, and became a believer in Jesus Christ. He was baptized by the Rev. Dr. Snodgrass, of the Presbyterian church, in Fayetteville, and received into the church. Since that time he has been trans-

ferred to the Presbyterian church in Wilmington, of which he has long been a consistent member. There are few Sabbaths in the year on which he is absent from the house of God.

"Uncle Moreau is an Arabic scholar, reading the language with great facility, and translating it with ease. His pronunciation of the Arabic is remarkably fine. An eminent Virginia scholar said, not long since, that he read it more beautifully than any one he ever heard, save a distinguished savant of the University of Halle. His translations are somewhat imperfect, as he never mastered the English language, but they are often very striking. We remember once hearing him read and translate the twenty-third psalm, and shall never forget the earnestness and fervour which shone in the old man's countenance, as he read of the going down into the dark valley, and using his own broken English, said, 'Me no fear, Master's with me there.' There were signs in his countenance, and in his voice, that he knew not only the words, but felt the blessed power of the truth they contained.

"Moreau has never expressed any wish to return to Africa. Indeed, he has always manifested a great aversion to it when proposed, changing the subject as soon as possible. When Dr. Jonas King, now of Greece, returned to his country from the East, in 1828, he was introduced in Fayetteville to Moreau. General Owen observed an evident reluctance on the part of the old man to converse with Dr. King. After some time he ascertained that the only reason of his reluctance was his fear that one who talked so well in Arabic might have been sent by his own countrymen to reclaim him, and carry him again over the sea. After his fears were removed, he conversed with Dr. King with great readiness and delight.

"He now regards his expatriation as a great providential favour. 'His coming to this country,' as he remarked to the writer, 'was all for good.' Mahommedanism has been supplanted in his heart by the better faith in Christ Jesus, and in the midst of a Christian family, where he is kindly watched over,

and in the midst of a church which honours him for his consistent piety, he is gradually going down to that dark valley, in which, his own firm hope is, that he will be supported and led by the hand of the Great Master, and from which he will emerge into the brightness of the perfect day."

This pious man was supplied with a copy of the New Testament in the Arabic language. He says, the translation is not good. Yet with the aid of the English, he gained much knowledge of God's word. Whenever I have seen him, his appearance was striking and venerable. His moral and Christian character has long been excellent. Christians, who were well acquainted with him, doubted not that he was preparing for a better world. Perhaps he has already gone to the rest of the redeemed.

How strange are God's ways. Through what sufferings he leads his chosen to the knowledge and enjoyment of himself.

How sure are God's purposes. His counsel, it shall stand. Of those whom the Father has given to Christ, he has lost none. All that the Father has given him, shall come unto him.

How sweet heaven will be after the sorrows and troubles of earth.

Let every man stand in his lot, and do and suffer the whole will of God.

Our reward in heaven will not depend upon our station on earth, but upon the rich and free grace of God, enabling us to serve him with fidelity. We "know that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." Eph. vi. 8.

There is hope for the heathen. It is found in the Gospel of Christ. Let them be brought to know it, and it will be to them life from the dead. The darkest land in heathendom shall yet rejoice in the light of life. One of the early converts to the Gospel was the Ethiopian eunuch, who, as church history informs us, became a great blessing to his

country. Meroh is another trophy of divine grace from the same dark continent. Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

XII.

LET POOR BOYS BE OF GOOD COURAGE.

MANY a poor boy falls under the power of discouragement. He is afraid he can never get on in the world. He would like to be useful, but he knows not how to act. Good old John Elliott said, "Prayer and pains through faith that is in Christ Jesus can do wonders." Cheer up, boys, good times may come yet. A physician in Philadelphia had dark times in early life. His business led him to sea. While there, a sailor boy was sent aloft. The vessel rolled very much. An old sailor saw that the boy's head was becoming giddy. To save his life, he cried out, "Look aloft, you sneaking lubber." The boy looked up and was no longer giddy. In his sadness, the Doctor heard the words; he applied them to himself. As often as trials came, he heard

the words of the old salt: "Look aloft, you sneaking lubber." He was thus preserved from falling under fatal despondency. He did his best, and God blessed him, and he rose to great eminence, and has told us that this story had a great effect on his life. There is a book entitled *Self-help*. It contains a list of such as have risen from humble life to great honour and usefulness. From that book I learn that from the barber's shop rose Sir Richard Arkwright, the inventor of the spinning-jenny, and the founder of the cotton manufacture of Great Britain; Lord Tenterden, one of the most distinguished of English Lord Chief Justices; and Turner, the very greatest among landscape painters. No one knows to a certainty what Shakespeare was; but it is unquestionable that he sprang from a very humble rank. The common rank of day labourers has given us Brindley, the engineer; Cook, the navigator; and Burns, the poet. Masons and bricklayers can boast of Ben Jonson, who worked at the building of Lincoln's Inn, with a trowel in his hand and

a book in his pocket; Edwards and Telford, the engineers; Hugh Miller, the geologist, and Allan Cunningham, the writer and sculptor; whilst among distinguished carpenters we find the names of Inigo Jones, the architect; Harrison, the chronometer maker; John Hunter, the physiologist; Romney and Opie, painters; Prof. Lee, the orientalist; and John Gibson, the sculptor. From the weaver class have sprung Simpson, the mathematician; Bacon, the sculptor; the two Milners, Adam Walker, John Foster, Wilson, the ornithologist; Dr. Livingstone, the missionary traveller; and Tannahill, the poet. Shoemakers have given us Sturgeon, the electrician; Samuel Drew, the essayist; Gifford, the editor of the *Quarterly Review;* Bloomfield, the poet; and William Carey, the missionary; whilst Morrison, another laborious missionary, was a maker of shoe-lasts. Within a few years, a profound naturalist, has been discovered in the person of a shoemaker at Banff, named Thomas Edwards, who, while maintaining himself by his trade, has devoted his leisure

to the study of natural science in all its branches; his researches in connection with the smaller crustacea having been rewarded by the discovery of a new species, to which the name of *Praniza Edwardsii* has been given by naturalists.

Nor have the tailors been altogether undistinguished, Jackson, the painter, having worked at that trade until he reached manhood. But what is, perhaps, more remarkable, one of the most gallant of British seamen, Admiral Hobson, who broke the boom at Vigo, in 1701, originally belonged to this calling. Cardinal Wolsey, De Foe, Akenside, and Kirke White, were the sons of butchers; Bunyan was a tinker, and Joseph Lancaster a basket-maker. Among the great names identified with the invention of the steam engine are those of Newcomen, Watt, and Stephenson; the first a blacksmith, the second a maker of mathematical instruments, and the third an engine fireman. Dr. Hutton, the geologist, and Bewick, the father of wood-engraving, were coal miners. Dodsley was a

footman, and Holcroft a groom. Baffin, the navigator, was a common seaman, and Sir Cloudesley Shovel a cabin-boy. Herschel played the oboe in a military band. Chantrey was a journeyman carver; Etty, a journeyman printer; and Sir Thomas Lawrence, the son of a tavern keeper.

Michael Faraday, the son of a poor blacksmith, was in early life apprenticed to a bookbinder, and worked at that trade until he reached his twenty-second year; he now occupies the very first rank as a philosopher, excelling even his master, Sir Humphrey Davy, in the art of lucidly expounding the most difficult and abstruse points in natural science. Not long ago, Sir Roderick Murchison discovered at Thurso, in the far north of Scotland, a profound geologist in the person of a baker there, named Robert Dick. When Sir Roderick called at the bake-house, in which he baked and earned his bread, Dick delineated to him by means of flour upon a board the geographical features and geological phenomena of his native county, point-

ing out the imperfections in the existing maps, which he had ascertained by travelling over the county in his leisure hours. On further inquiry, Sir Roderick ascertained that the humble individual before him was not only a capital baker and geologist, but a first-rate botanist. "I found," said the Director-General of the Geographical Society, "to my great humiliation, that this baker knew more of botanical science than I did, and that there were only some twenty or thirty specimens of flowers which he had not collected. Some he had obtained as presents, some he had purchased; but the greater portion had been accumulated by his industry, in his native county of Caithness, and the specimens were all arranged in the most beautiful order, with their scientific names affixed."

Not only does God encourage the poor and the humble to do their best by raising up men as we have seen, but also by his precious word. When God so remarkably answered the prayer of Hannah, and made her the joyful mother of Samuel, who was to serve the Lord and

become so great a prophet, she sang a glad song: "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none besides thee: neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry, ceased: so that the barren hath become seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dung hill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of

the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail," &c. Here is the whole story. God is a helper of the poor. He hears the young ravens when they cry. And is not a poor boy of more value than many ravens?

The way to rise is to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. Let us lie low at his feet, and look up to his eternal and propitious throne for grace and strength, for courage and success. Let us do our duty to God. Let us hold fast the salvation of Christ. He can carry us safely through all trials and difficulties. He is kind. He is wise. He is strong. None can resist him. None can defeat him. None pities so much as he. His blessing is rich and adds no sorrow.

Let all little boys trust in the Lord. Let them tell him their troubles. Let them ask him to carry them through their trials.

XIII.

A RIDE IN THE PINE WOODS.

We were dashing along at the rate of thirty miles an hour on one of those fine railroads in the State of Ohio, when I discovered my friends, Mr. and Mrs. N. I was glad to renew an old and valued friendship. We had just eaten a good breakfast, and were all well and lively. In a way the most natural, the details of which would not interest others, the substance of the following narrative was recited. It struck me as a pleasant illustration of many truths of God's word. At my request the narrative has since been written, and I give it in an unbroken thread. I will merely say that Mr. N. is an eminent lawyer, and his wife is the daughter of a distinguished minister of the gospel. She says:

Soon after my marriage, my husband had

occasion to go upon the "circuit." For my safe-keeping and pleasure, he proposed to leave me at the plantation of a friend during his absence. This plantation lay upon the river, on his way to the point where he was to take the stage for the interior; but as we neared the landing a violent thunder-storm arose, and the winds and waves became so tempestuous that no boat could put out. This was a great disappointment. My health was very delicate, and the country was in a very rude state. My husband felt quite unwilling to expose me to the hardships of palmetto roots, log houses and rough fare; but there being no place where I could be left, and he unable to make any arrangement to send me back, I was forced to take my seat at his side in the stage, and take my first experience of the interior. We made our way, day after day, over the rough roads, until we reached the last place where the court sat, about a hundred miles from the river. I was much amused with the novelty of the double-pinned log-house where we were lodged. No plaster or lathing was

there on the rooms, the chairs were of home manufacture, with seats of raw, undressed hide, and beds of the same description. The table arrangements were also quite new to me, and I was enjoying myself heartily, until one day towards the close of the week, my husband entered my room, and informed me that he feared we should have difficulty in getting away. There was but one stage a week which ran from E. to the river, and this stage reached the point where we were on Saturday evening, and left the next morning (Sunday) on its way to the river. This intelligence gave me much concern. It was now a season of the year when it was not considered prudent for those who were not acclimated to linger in that part of the country. The creeks were badly swollen, and the difficulty was every day increasing. The roads, rough with palmetto roots, were almost unendurable even in the easiest conveyance, and the distance from settlement to settlement so great that it was desirable to have some company through the long, dreary pine barrens and woods. We

were much perplexed. There was not the slightest prospect of our being able to make any better arrangement the next week. My husband went out and offered a large sum for a wagon or saddle horses, by which we could reach the next station on Saturday, some forty miles East, and so be ready for the stage on Monday morning. But all in vain! He returned to me quite discouraged, and at a loss what to do. It was impossible for me to start deliberately upon a journey on God's holy Sabbath morning—that day of "*rest*," "hallowed" and "sanctified" by our God and King himself. Not only was the prohibition distinctly written in his sacred Book, and the great command enforced by his own example from the beginning of the world, but the fond memories of my early years had thrown a halo around the *Pearl of Days*, which could not be dimmed. Nor yet an orphan and a stranger, I had stood before my venerable father and oft repeated,

"I must not work, I must not play
Upon God's holy Sabbath day!"

The stillness of the Sabbath morning, which, in my childish fancy, I supposed composed of different elements from other days, the quietness of the household arrangements, the not doing our own pleasure, or speaking our own words, or thinking our own thoughts, the Sunday books, the sweet hours of sacred evening praise, all these had left their indelible stamp upon the *Holy Sabbath*, and should I now break through all these associations, nay, break *God's commandments*, and refuse "*to rest*" upon a day, not my own, but God's? It could not be. We remained. I was young, and it was a severe trial of my untried faith. We saw the other lawyers depart. One after another left, until we were quite alone. I tried to believe "Deus providebit." But it looked very dreary. It so chanced, however, that on Monday morning some business of importance demanded Mr. N.'s attention, and he was glad he had remained. On Tuesday, much to his surprise, a gentleman, and a stranger, came to him, and alluding to the unwillingness of the lady to leave in the Sun-

day stage, remarked, "I have a four mule team, a U. S. baggage wagon empty, and a couple of saddle horses, with two servants, going directly to the river. They are at your service, sir." The circumstances were these. The retinue in question had been brought up to court under an attachment, a thing, of course, very unusual. It might never happen again. The affair was settled, and now they were about to return to the river, and were politely and urgently pressed upon my husband for his use. You may be sure that, in my youthful enthusiasm, I had no doubt they were sent by God. I had long before heard the story of the offering he had provided to take Isaac's place, and this seemed very much like it. It was very natural that an animal should be caught in the thicket at the moment that Abraham needed him, and it was also nothing surprising that these should be going down to the river at this time when we wanted them. Does not his providence extend over all, and were we not his children, seeking to keep his commandment? Surely the trial of

our faith *was* precious, and was found unto praise and honour! But difficulties arose. Our host remonstrated. "The creeks are badly swollen! It is a dangerous exposure for you to ride under our Southern sun, and with these April skies; should you be wet by the rain, look out for the fever!" Thursday morning came, and I was sick in bed. However, with an effort, I rose and made preparations for leaving. The sky was lowering, and thick, heavy clouds obscured heaven's own blue, as the drops seemed just ready to fall. A mattress was laid in the huge wagon, the saddle horses were brought round, and trusting in God, who hung these dark curtains, and who wrote these commandments with his own finger, we bade our host adieu. I never saw him again. He died not long after, but I well remember his exclamation as he aided me to mount: "This is carrying matters altogether *too far*."

Our little caravan proceeded on its way somewhat anxiously, and night overtook us in the woods. The rain had not yet fallen,

neither had the sun appeared. We built our watch-fire and rejoiced in the light-wood blaze. All arrangements being made, we lay down to rest under the protection of our heavenly Father. My husband whispered in my ear, as my eyes were closing, "Don't be afraid in the night, should you hear the howling of the wolves: they will not come near the fire." But I will not weary you with the details of that very happy journey. We rode on horseback, except when we wished to rest in the wagon; saw the beautiful flocks of deer roaming in their native freedom; roasted our venison on sticks over a light-wood fire; and I found I was able to swim a creek, lying at full length on my horse, with considerable skill and confidence.

One of the most remarkable circumstances of the whole journey was the state of the weather. God hung his thick screen of black clouds over our heads the entire distance which we made in three days, so that the sun did not smite us by day, neither did he suffer a drop of his rain to descend upon our heads.

Providence.

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I well remember passing the last stream where we had anticipated considerable difficulty, and to which my husband had frequently alluded to cool the ardour of my enthusiasm. When we approached it at last, I ventured in on my horse, and reached the farther bank before he had commenced the passage. I remember how I tossed up my hat and shouted triumph, somewhat after the manner of Miriam and her damsels, after crossing the Red Sea. That Saturday night found us safely housed at our journey's end, and ready for the boat to convey us home the next week. All our perils were over, all our doubts removed; and with the recollections of a peculiarly delightful journey, were mingled thoughts of praise and thanksgiving to Him who had so unexpectedly provided for all our wants, and revealed himself to us in the keeping of his commandments! These circumstances made a deep impression upon me *for life.* I was young and just commencing "*life in earnest.*"

Trust in the Lord and do good. Delight

thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him.

In keeping God's commandments there is great reward. This is true even in this life. There is nothing made by sinning. There is nothing gained by cheating. There is no more foolish act than an attempt to rob God of his dues.

Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. Marked providences have not ceased. God still rules the world. He can and will reward us for all our fidelity. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

XIV.

MONEY,

THE Bible does not forbid us to have money. It says we must not love money. Even little boys and girls sometimes set their hearts too much on money. Some parents teach their children to get all they can, and keep all they get. This is a sad mistake. When parents give their children money, they should, indeed, teach them not to waste it; but they should also teach them not to hoard it up. Heaping up silver is a poor business. We were not made for such a purpose. He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver. Love of money made Judas a wicked traitor. Indeed, the Bible says, The love of money is the root of all evil.

Lord Harwich, once Lord Chancellor of England, was said to be worth £800,000.

Yet Dr. King in his anecdotes of his own times says, that the Lord Chancellor set the same value on a half a crown in the days of his great riches, as when he was worth only £100.

Queen Anne ascended the throne of England in the year 1702. The greatest captain of her time was the Duke of Marlborough. His riches were immense. Yet when he was very old and infirm, he would walk from the public room in Bath to his lodgings, on a cold, dark night, to save a sixpence in chair hire. When this great, foolish man died, he left more than £1,500,000 sterling. Yet all his wealth and honours were inherited by a grandson of Lord Trevor, who had long been one of his enemies. Thus men heap up riches and know not who shall gather them. Ps. xxxix. 6.

Sir James Lowther, after changing a piece of silver in George's Coffee-house, and paying for his dish of coffee, was helped into his chariot, for he was lame and infirm. He went home and sometime after returned to the same coffee-house to demand a half penny, asserting

that he had received a bad half-penny of change on his last visit. This man had an income of about £48,000 a year. He did not know whom to appoint his heir, and yet he held on greedily to every farthing.

Sir Thomas Colby, killed himself by rising in the middle of the night, when he was in a profuse sweat, the effect of a medicine which he had taken for that purpose, and walking down stairs to look for the key of his cellar, which he had inadvertently left on a table in his parlour; he was apprehensive that his servants might seize the key, and rob him of a bottle of port wine. This man died intestate, and left more than £1,200,000 in the funds, which were shared among five or six day labourers, who were his nearest relations.

Sir William Smythe was another foolish miser. When he was near seventy years of age, he was wholly deprived of his sight; and was persuaded to be couched by Taylor, the oculist, who, by agreement, was to have sixty guineas, if he restored his patient to any degree of sight. Taylor succeeded in his ope-

ration, and Sir William was able to read and write without the use of spectacles during the rest of his life; but as soon as the operation was performed, and Sir William saw the good effect of it, instead of being overjoyed as any other person would have been, he began to lament the loss, as he called it, of his sixty guineas. His contrivance was, therefore, how to cheat the oculist; he pretended he could not see anything perfectly; for that reason the bandage on his eye was continued a month longer than the usual time. By this means he obliged Taylor to compound the bargain, and accept of twenty guineas; for a covetous man thinks no method dishonest which he may legally practise to save his money.

People, who are foolish about money, did not all live across the water nor a long time ago. Many people in this country are crazy about money. For it they give up home and peace and quiet. For it some lose soul and body both.

A few years ago a young man in Ohio was doing well. He had gained some few hundred

dollars. But he was smitten with the desire to visit the rich gold mines of Pike's Peak. There he hoped soon to earn bags of gold. He raised all the money he could, bought groceries, and started for a new El Dorado. After travelling along, he fell in with swarms of hungry people. They begged as for their lives. If he had not given them, they would probably have taken all they wanted. His kind feelings led him to aid them. Soon his groceries were all gone. After a long and wearisome journey, he returned home with these fruits of his expedition, *one buffalo calf, caught on the plains, and two young wolves.* This was the amount of his stock on hand. Perhaps he may have gained some increase of wisdom; yet if he did, he certainly paid pretty dearly for it. He that maketh haste to be rich, troubleth his own house.

How pleasant it is to see people generous and liberal. You can hardly ask some men to do a kind thing, without their being prompt to do it.

The Rev. Mr. Rogers, of England, attended

by an officer of his church, called one morning at the house of an excellent woman. She was a widow, and had recently lost by death a pious and beloved daughter. She had but little wordly goods. No great gift was expected from her. Indeed, they called upon her chiefly to show their respect, and not to seem to forget her, or despise her mite. To their great surprise, however, when their errand was made known, she with much promptness and cordiality presented them with a large sum. It was so large that they felt and expressed doubts about accepting it. She put an end to the difficulty by saying with much decision, "You must take it all; I had laid it up as a portion for my daughter, and I am determined that he who has my daughter shall have her portion too."

Would you be happy? Try to make others happy. One of the best ways of getting good is by doing good. Always put duty before enjoyment. Happiness, like a good name, follows right living. Duty is the road. Happiness is the pleasant city at the end of that road. Have you not thought too much of

your own happiness and too little of that of others? He that watereth shall be watered. Think of others. Live for others. Perhaps it is Chitwood, who says:

If in one poor bleeding bosom
I a woe-swept chord have stilled;
If a dark and restless spirit
I with hope of heaven have filled;
If I've made, for life's hard battle,
One faint heart grow brave and strong;
Then, my God, I thank thee, bless thee,
For the precious gift of song.

Honour Christ with your substance. He gave his heart's blood for you. It is a small thing that you should give all you have for the promotion of his cause. A deaf mute was asked, What is gratitude? His reply was, "Gratitude is the memory of the heart." Have you such a memory of the debt you owe to God?

XV.

RULES FOR CHILDREN.

My young friends, you cannot too soon begin to take heed to your ways. Form some rules to guide you in the way of honour; and stick to them. Be careful not to adopt wrong rules. "He who lives not by rule, lives not at all." Read the lives of great men, and see how they put a bridle on themselves, and never let your hearts, or words, or acts be the result of recklessness or evil passions.

I find in my drawer the rules of behaviour, which after his death were found among the papers of Washington, in his own hand-writing. It is said they were written at the age of thirteen. Here they are:—

Every action in company ought to be with some sign of respect to those present.

Be no flatterer, neither play with any one that delights not to be played with.

Read no letter, books or papers in company.

Come not near the books or papers of another so as to read them.

Look not over another when he is writing a letter.

Let your countenance be cheerful, but in serious matters be grave.

Show not yourself glad at another's misfortunes.

Let your discourses with others on matters of business be short.

It is good manners to let others speak first.

Strive not with your superior in argument, but be modest.

When a man does all he can, do not blame him, though he succeeds not well.

Take admonitions thankfully.

Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the injury of another.

In your dress be modest, and consult your condition.

It is better to be alone than in bad company.

Let your conversation be without malice or envy.

Urge not your friend to discover a secret.

Break not a jest when none take pleasure in mirth.

Speak not injurious words either in jest or earnest.

Gaze not on the blemishes of others.

When another speaks, be attentive.

Be not apt to relate news.

Be not curious to know the affairs of others.

Speak not evil of the absent.

When you speak of God, let it be with reverence.

Labour to keep alive in your heart that spark of heavenly fire called conscience.

If you should live by these rules, could you not rise to honour? I hope you will. I wish you the best in this world and that which is to come.

Cativy flourished about the fifth century. He was the principal of a college in South Wales. He was called The Wise. One of his pupils was Taliessin, the chief of bards.

In giving to his scholar his usual blessing, he thus spake:—

Think before thou speakest.

1. What thou shalt speak.
2. Why thou shalt speak.
3. To whom thou mayest have to speak.
4. About whom thou art going to speak.
5. What will become of what thou mayest speak.
6. What may be the benefit of what thou shalt speak.
7. Who may be listening to what thou shalt speak.

Put thy words on thy fingers, and before thou speakest turn them these seven ways, and there will never come any harm from what thou shalt say.

I hope you read your Bible every day. That is the best of all books. Its rules are the wisdom of God. Here are a few things said by the wisest of mere men:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

My son, if sinners entice thee, consent

thou not. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.

Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.

Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee.

The apostle James in very few words gives three excellent rules: "Swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

The Saviour of sinners says three things of the greatest importance to the young:

I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you.

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so them.

He that will do as the Saviour directs shall live piously and die happily. Nothing but holy living makes certain happy-dying. In company one day, the Rev. John Newton spoke of the death of a lady. A young female who sat near, said, "Oh, sir, how did she die?" Newton replied, "There is a more important question than that, my dear, which you should have asked first." "Sir," said she, "what question can be more important than how did she die?" "How did she *live?*" was Newton's reply.

XVI.

THE ANGELS. THEY TAKE CARE OF CHILDREN.

THERE is a race of beings in heaven who are often sent by God on errands of mercy or of justice. They are called angels. Both in Hebrew and Greek, the word angel means messenger. Sometimes angels are spoken of as thrones, dominions, principalities and powers. Sometimes they are called living ones, because they are so full of life and energy. Sometimes they are called cherubim or knowing ones, and seraphim or burning ones.

Angels were created before men. Then they were put on trial, some of them kept not their first estate, but fell into sin. How many sinned, we do not know, but the number was

large. A legion of them possessed one man when Christ was on earth.

Angels are pure spirits. They have no bodies; although sometimes they have assumed bodies on special occasions. Their number is very great. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels.* Jesus said that if he had asked his Father, he would have at once sent him twelve legions of angels to deliver him from his enemies. Taking a legion at six thousand, the number here named would be seventy-two thousand. On the day of judgment, angels shall be the reapers to gather the harvest of the world.

Their power is very great. They "excel in strength." In one night one angel destroyed all the first-born of man and beast among the Egyptians. In one night an angel destroyed one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in Sennacherib's army. So we read in the Scriptures of "mighty angels."

Their glory is very great. In the days of

* Paul says, we are come to an innumerable company of angels.

John, one of these angels came down from heaven, and his radiance shone with such brightness that his glory lighted the earth. John thought it was an appearance of God himself. No doubt if an angel should appear in his unveiled glory in any assembly on earth, they would all become as dead men.

The residence of these holy beings is heaven. They are called angels of heaven. Jacob saw them descending and ascending on a ladder. Christ himself says, "They do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

Angels never grow old. At the resurrection of our Saviour, an angel was seen in his sepulchre and he looked like a young man, though he was certainly more than four thousand years old.

Angels know much. As they came from the hand of God they had fine minds; and they have always loved knowledge. They have travelled a great deal and seen many parts of the world. And then they have thought much on what they have seen and

heard. And they have always thought correctly. They are indeed not wise as compared with God, for he chargeth his angels with folly. But they are very wise compared with men.

Angels feel a lively interest in the cause of Christ. They always have done so. When God brought his Son into the world, he said, "Let all the angels of God worship him." Before Christ was born he sometimes appeared on earth with one or more of the angels with him. Isaiah says that he saw in a vision the Son of God worshipped by the seraphim with the greatest humility. An angel announced his conception. Another announced his birth. Many angels sang a song in the hearing of men when Christ was born. After his temptation, angels came and ministered unto him. In his last dreadful agony, an angel strengthened him. When he ascended to heaven, a great number of angels received him.

The angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation. Some have thought every saint had

a guardian angel, who took special charge of him. This may or may not be so. But every child of God is cared for by the angels as much as is necessary. God said to his people that his angels should bear them up in their hands lest at any time they should dash their foot against a stone. The angel of the Lord encampeth around about the dwelling of the just. Angels repelled those wicked men who assaulted the house of righteous Lot. Angels help the pious to die. Angels bear the spirits of the just to heaven.

But angels have a special care of children. Matt. xviii. 10. Many a time would they fall and be broken, but the angels hold them up. When their father and mother are asleep, the angels watch by their cradle and keep harm at a distance. Many a house would be burned down through the carelessness of its inmates, if it were not for the angels. It is true we cannot see them, but they can see us. We know not when they are present with us, except as we find so good care taken of us. We do not thank them for their kindness, because

they are God's servants. We thank God for them. What they do for us, they do out of love to God. They wish God to have all the glory. They are not vain like poor foolish men.

If we die in the faith, we shall be like unto the angels. One text says, We shall be equal unto the angels. We shall certainly be with them and share the bliss they enjoy. It will be a wonderful day when God will send forth his angels to gather all his elect from the four winds of heaven and bring them in to unite in the marriage supper of the Lamb. Are we so living as to prepare us for that great and solemn account?

XVII.

COUNSELS FOR CHILDREN.

I. LIVE in peace. Hate all strife. It is a dreadful thing to live at war with those around us. Be kind to everybody. If you cannot live quietly with any one of your companions, withdraw from him. It is a sad sight to see little boys and girls engaged in disputes or quarrels. Jesus never quarreled with any body.

II. Be very kind to the weak, the poor, and the unfortunate around you. God, long a o, said, "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child." Ex. xxii. 22. He also said, "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind." Lev. xix. 14. It is both mean and wicked to take advantage of the infirmities and misfortunes of those around us.

III. Use your best efforts to become wise. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. If you do not know a thing, ask others. This is Scriptural. God said to the Jews: "When your children shall say to you, what mean ye by this service? ye shall say, it is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover," &c. We should think before we speak, and not thoughtlessly ask silly questions; but if a child never asks a question till he knows it is wise, he will probably die a fool. Better is a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king.

IV. Watch your lips. Keep your tongue from evil, and your mouth from speaking guile. Life and death are in the power of the tongue. Think before you speak. Ask yourself if it is right for you to say anything; then try to speak kindly and truly and soberly. It is a sad sight to see a child uttering nothing but folly. Childhood and youth spent in sin are a great vanity. Beware of evil speaking.

V. Be not too fond of play. Life is a serious business. It is right that children should

have their time to play. But some hate work and hate their books, and love their ease and would be glad to play all the time. Learn to find your joy in doing your duty. It may be hard for you to do some things, but try your best, and by degrees they will become easier.

VI. Children sometimes have foolish and wicked parents. Job tells of such: "They were children of fools, yea, children of base men. They were viler than the earth." Job xxx. 8. If such is your case, your trials may be very great. But do all you can to show a meek and quiet spirit, a tender and loving heart. If your parents are wicked, pray for them the more. Ask God to forgive them. If you yourself are a Christian, that does not exempt you from the obligation of reverencing your parents.

VII. Obey your parents. Obey them promptly, cheerfully, in all things that are lawful. I hope they would not command you to do a wicked thing. If they should, you must not do it. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy

father and mother; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." Eph. vi. 1–3. "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." Col. iii. 20.

VIII. As you grow up, try to put away childish things, 1 Cor. xiii. 11. As it is a shame for a child to ape the ways of old people, so it is a shame for grown-up people to think and speak and act like little children.

IX. Let your conduct towards God be very humble. We are all sinners, and you are no exception. God hates a lofty spirit. We ought all to be humble, and never lift up our heads in pride.

X. Be thankful to God. He has done a great deal for you. What a mercy it is that he did not let loose the passions of bad men against you, as he did against those children in Bethlehem, when a voice was heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted, because they were not.

XI. Be very kind and respectful to old

people. Never make fun of them. Their age itself should protect them. You remember the children that mocked the old prophet, Elisha, crying, "Go up, thou bald-head; go up, thou bald-head." And you remember how God sent forth two she bears out of the wood, and tore forty and two children of them. Children may often be gay without any sin; but let them never make merry over the appearance or infirmities of old people, and especially of aged ministers.

XII. Remember that however long you may live, you must die at last. You may die even in childhood. David fasted and went in and lay all night upon the earth and prayed that his little child might live. But it died, and so must he.

XIII. Do all you can to be like Jesus Christ. He was the best model that children ever had. He is the best friend they now have. When on earth, he cured sick children just as he cured other people. Oh, that every body, old and young, would trust the Saviour.

XIV. Nor is childhood any excuse for not

doing our duty. When God called Jeremiah to do a great work, he begged to be excused, saying, I am a child. But God said unto him, "Say not I am a child." It is safe for old or young to do anything that God bids them. It is very unsafe for them not to do what he commands. If God were to require any one of us to rule a world, the only safe way for us to do, would be honestly to try. We may be young and ignorant, but let us not be wicked and rebellious. Jeremiah gave up his objection, made in undoubted modesty, and went and did as God bade him. It is a pity that so many plead their childhood to the hurt of their own souls.

Sometimes when a child confesses its sin against God or man, he pleads as an excuse that he is but a child. But to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin, whether he is old or young. Children must give account to God as well as others. His law binds them fast. It is true they are not expected to do the work of grown-up people; just as grown men are not required to do the work of

angels. But let all do the best they can. Let them hate sin and flee from evil. Let them do right and seek truth and serve God and obey their parents, and not plead that they are too young to do these things. If they are old enough to plead against doing their duty, they are old enough to do it.

GOD THE GUIDE OF THE YOUNG.

Guide of all who trust in thee,
Condescend my friend to be,
Whilst I tread earth's pilgrimage
Through my youth to oldest age;
Lord, attend me night and day,
Suffer not my feet to stray.

To my understanding show
What is for my good to know,
By thy teaching may I shun
Paths in which the wicked run;
Guide me in that better road
Leading up to thy abode.

Abba, Father, God of love,
From thy throne of light above,
'Midst the hymns thine angels raise,
'Mongst the songs which show thy praise,
Hear my feeble, humble plea,
In thy love remember me.

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